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s on Presbyterian Topics.—No. 1.

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CATHOLICITY

OF THE

Presbyterian Church.

BY

REV. PROF. CAMPBELL, M.A.

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[The following is one of the course of lectures on "Presbyterian Topics," recently delivered in Montreal.]

"I BELIEVE in the Holy Catholic Church." Although these words were not dictated by James, the son of Alphæus, as Rufinus asserted, nor had any place in the Church's Confessions of Faith till the second century, they are true and good words for any Christian to utter. And yet they may stand in need of some explanation, as a reminiscence of my school days tells me. The head-master of one of my earliest schools was a strict Episcopalian, and required that on a certain day of the week his scholars, after reading a portion of the Scripture, should recite the Apostles' Creed. But one of them, the son of a Welsh Minister, stoutly refused, basing his objections on the article relating to the Church, and maintained that, being neither a Catholic nor a Churchman, it would be an act of base apostacy to make any such confession. The boy was

wrong undoubtedly, and yet he had too good reason for being wrong. Ask the majority of people what the Catholic Church is and they will direct you to the Church of Rome. Ask the larger half of the minority and they will either inform you that it is their particular denomination, or, if not so highly favoured as to belong to a religious body claiming the name Catholic, that it consists of narrow-minded people who think themselves in the right and everybody else in the wrong. I need hardly inform this enlightened audience that the Greek word "catholic" simply means universal, and nothing more. That organization which contains in itself all the Christian teachers and disciples of Christ in the whole wide world, may call itself Catholic. The Presbyterian Church has never made this claim. It cannot do so consistently with the least regard for truth, nor has it ever shown the slightest desire so to unchurch the rest of Christendom. But if our Presbyterian Church cannot and will not arrogate to itself the title of universality, it does not thereby place itself in an inferior position to any sect of professing Christians; for no other Church can assume the name Catholic without, on the one hand, casting contempt upon the body of Christ, or, on the other, playing the fool's part with words that have no meaning.

For the catholicity of the Presbyterian Church, therefore, we must look below the rent fabric of modern Christendom, and beyond the mere vision of

a visible unity to the lofty ideal that rules the mind of the true Churchman, and to the warm emotions that flow from his generous heart. I shall, indeed, before I close, direct your attention to the constant recognition in the Church of our Presbyterian faith and polity, and to their present wide diffusion, but would first seek to exhibit our catholicity in the conception of the Church which our co-religionists have ever held, and in the relations they have sustained to Christendom and the world at large.

Who has not known the value of a high ideal, a master principle of thought, a purifier of the moral nature, a rebuker of the base and sordid, a grand incentive to noble deeds and life-long labours. Though its beauty and proportions be never mirrored in the real world without, he runs no wild-goose chase, follows no will-of-the-wisp dance, that pursues it with heart and mind, for it leaves its impress on the more real world within, and stamps the soul with one God-like character at least. The artist and the poet, the philosopher and the statesman, have only begun in these degenerate days to pretend to limit the flight of their art and science by the well-defined horizon that separates the actual and the sensible from the great depths and heights beyond. I say they pretend thus to limit themselves only, for there is not one who, while shutting out from his mental vision the radiant heights of the unseen universe, has not lost himself at times in depths obscure, to which no human observation has

ever penetrated. The science of the Christian is transcendental. His facts, it is true, are among the most real and universal in man's experience, but for their causes and their ends alike, he must transcend the limits of time and space and the fleeting show of all earthly things. The Godhead has indeed been revealed but revealed under a dark veil of humiliation and suffering. The Divine antitype of perfect manhood the world has seen, and its image is before us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but the vision of perfect manhood glorified has been vouchsafed for a few brief moments only to three poor Galilean fishermen in the holy mount. True theology seeks to free itself from the traditions of men and the imperfections of human thought and experience, influenced as these are by time and circumstance, that it may rise to an apprehension of thoughts and ways that are higher than man's. The devout naturalist strives to attain to the Master Builder's plan, to a knowledge of the archetypes in the Divine mind, according to which the different departments of nature assumed their wonderful varieties of form and structure. These archetypes he finds in no existing individual or species. They are ideals that the eye of sense has never beheld. Fictions men may call them as far as material existence is concerned, yet they are necessary fictions to the mind that looks beyond the chaos of the phenomenal to the order and harmony of the real. So it is with the true churchman's concep-

tion of the Church. He finds his model is no species or individual, though they be called of Paul or of Apollos, of Cephas or of Christ. Yet is his ideal no abstraction, the result of induction from a comparison of existing communities, but one revealed from heaven itself in the words of that Son of Man, who came down from heaven to pray in the garden of Gethsemane and suffer on the bitter cross, "that they all may be one."

There are those who hold that these words, and kindred expressions of the inspired apostles, bear no reference to a visible unity. I am happy in being permitted to leave such objections in the hands of the rev. lecturer on the Constitution of the Church. Dealing, as I am, not with arguments but with facts, I can simply say that such views have always been those of a very small minority in the Church; that in many centuries they have had no exponent even among the worst of Separatists; and that from Presbyterians they have never met with an ounce of sympathy. As early as the time of Tertullian in the second century, though he himself was in a measure a schismatic, the churches of Africa required from their members a profession of faith in the Church catholic. It was high time; for the divisions foreshadowed in the days of Paul had become a matter of painful anxiety to devout believers in the pillar and ground of the truth. Then followed the martyr Cyprian, a grander character by far than he whom in his humility he delighted

to call "the Master." Diligent and faithful in the discharge of his immediate duties to his people, his soul burned with a great longing for the unity of the Church. He erred in working out the details of that unity, and laid the foundations of the Episcopal and Papal system in his errors, yet the end he aimed at was a visible realization of the petition of Gethsemane. No man ever believed more firmly in the holy Catholic Church. The œcumenical councils, beginning in the reign of Constantine, testified, as provincial synods long before had done in part, to the doctrine which the African father had advocated. Augustine again, that wondrous combination of strong, stern intellect and bleeding heart, was roused by the schism of the Donatists, the first voluntaries of ecclesiastical history, to follow in the footsteps of his African brethren, and to declare that God desires His Church's unity. And so the truth passed on to the time of Gregory the Great, who, disdaining the title of universal bishop and charging him who held it with blasphemy, did, nevertheless, more than any other pontiff to bring the Christian world to the feet of Rome. He was a sixth century Cyprian in his conception of what the Church should be, and unhappily went far beyond the martyr of Carthage in his erroneous methods for carrying out the great design. A wish for uniformity and subjection took the place of the old desire for unity; and force and fraud superseded the intercessory prayer. Noble missionary churches, full of life and zeal, and

purer far than those of Rome and Constantinople, fell before the rage for centralization. The Churches of the East and West were mutually excommunicated; witnesses for the truth arose in both to upbraid them with their gross defection, a defection that increased and intensified from year to year; yet still the grand ideal remained, and the words "I believe in the holy Catholic Church." They found an echo on the lips of British Culdees and Italian Waldenses, English Lollards and Bohemian Hussites; for corruption could not corrupt, nor blood quench, nor martyr fires destroy the Church's archetype. It was this that kept holy men in the Church of Rome, even when its days were darkest and its crimes called most loudly to heaven. The reformers before the Reformation were no schismatics, that causelessly withdrew from Rome's communion. They did not wish to go. Rightly or wrongly she was to them the Church, and they would fain have remained within her borders to carry on a work of purification that should have made the unfaithful spouse of Christ once more all glorious. They were driven out with fire and sword and fierce anathemas, still clinging to the doctrine of the Church universal. And so it was with the Reformers proper. They would fain have reformed the Church, but it would not be reformed; they would have remained in visible unity with Rome as a protesting section of the Church, had liberty to carry out their own reforms been granted them. In individual states Presbyterianism itself was

no schism, but the effect of provincial reformations. No new churches arose in the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, but, in these, sections of the old Church accepted a reformation, a restoration to primitive faith and polity, that the Church elsewhere refused. In Scotland so thoroughly was this the case that even those bishops were retained in their sees who did not receive the new order of things. In England also the Presbyterian Church, which was for a time supreme in the days of the Commonwealth, was no sect. It was the Church of England purified by those who from the Reformation had protested against mere partial amendment of Rome's unapostolic ways. Independency was a sect in the judgment of our Presbyterian forefathers, and, with all respect for the piety and worth of Independents here and wherever they may be found, I must say that it was they who under the Protectorate gave English Presbyterianism its death-blow. But for Cromwell the Church of England might have been Presbyterian to-day. The Puritans were no seceders; they hated the very thought of schism. And this perhaps is why in Milton's eyes "new presbyter was but old priest writ large." The idea of setting up another Christian communion alongside of the Church of England never entered their minds. They were the Church of England, purified and thus brought into those relations with the reformed Churches of Scotland, France, Germany and

Switzerland, for which Knox and Beza, Zanchius and Bullinger had pleaded in vain.

It may be new to many of my hearers that in a land so famous for ecclesiastical secessions as Scotland, the doctrine of the Church's catholicity found numerous and strenuous supporters. A glance at Walker's Theology and Theologians of Scotland will show that their number was legion and their views as decided as those of Cyprian and Augustine. "This conception of the Church," says Walker, "of which in at least some aspects we have practically so much lost sight, had a firm hold of the Scottish theologians of the seventeenth century. It enabled them to meet the Church idealism of Rome—in many ways so grand and attractive—with a nobler Church idealism. It enabled them to throw back the charge that Protestantism fails to realize the Bible doctrine of Church unity —that it dismembers and breaks up the kingdom of heaven upon earth in severing it from its visible centre of unity—with the reply that Protestant unity is as much a reality as Roman unity, only that the centre of it is in heaven, not on the banks of the Tiber. Of this great visible Church the various separate true Churches are members, in communion with one another, related to one another like the departments of a kingdom; and though differences may exist between them, they are not on that account to be regarded as in opposition or conflict. In accordance with this idea, the Œcumenical Council or Assembly was acknowledged by them

to be the supreme Church authority on the sort of questions which naturally fall within its scope, questions bearing on such matters as are necessary, not indeed to the Church's being or well-being, but certainly to its highest well-being. It was also held that it was only the evil of the times that prevented a Protestant Œcumenical from assembling and pronouncing sentence of excommunication on the Church of Rome as a false Church, or in some form cutting it off from ecclesiastical fellowship."

The Church of to-day would hardly care to homologate all that these old divines have said on the subject of catholicity, yet in its essentials the doctrine remains the same. Modifications have arisen in the application of it, but it has never lost its hold upon the Scottish mind. Good men went out from the Church of Scotland not lightly, but with strong and weighty reasons for visible separation, and other good men were driven out from its communion. They took the doctrine of the Church with them, and their standards, government and practice were in nowise altered. They worshipped in no chapels or meeting-houses, repudiated the name "Dissenter," and were recognized in Protestant Christendom as a Church of Christ and part of the Church universal. But while good men went forth from the Church of Scotland in spite of their adherence to the Church's catholicity, other good men for the sake of that doctrine remained in the midst of what they acknowledged to be wrong. The

bitterness of separation wore away in time, unions took the place of divisions, and finally none refused to her sister communions a place in the catholic Church. Once only in the closing year of last century did the Church of Scotland cut herself off from communion with any other section of the Church of Christ for the purpose of excluding from her pulpits evangelical ministers of the Church of England. It was a great mistake and will never be repeated.

Episcopalians may decry our orders and exclude us from their pulpits, but for the setting forth of gospel truth ours are open to them. The Baptists may refuse our members a seat at the Lord's Table; they shall nevertheless if they choose partake in our communion. The Methodists are dissenters, from the Church of England standpoint, and, according to our views of truth, are one-sided in doctrine; but our Presbyterian Church knows no dissenters, and, spite of differences, calls them brethren. Nay, inasmuch as the Protestant Œcumenical Council has not yet sat in judgment on the Greek and Roman and other apostate Churches, we still receive their baptism in the name of the Trinity, even though Presbyterians have ever held that no baptism is valid but that administered by an ordained pastor of the Church. We believe neither in Pope nor bishop, hold anti-pædo-baptism and congregational government to be unscriptural, reject Arminianism, Ritualism and Latitudi-

narianism, but we have for all that strong faith in the holy catholic Church.

I have already indicated that the idea which Presbyterians formed of the Church was no mere definition for the mind, but a ruling principle that manifested itself in their relations with Christendom and with the world at large. Presbyterian Churches were local only in name and in matters of government. They recognized their true position as sections of the one visible Church, and strove for that Church's unity. Thus we find Zwingle and Oecolampadius, the Swiss reformers, tenderly and earnestly pleading for union with Luther and Melancthon; and John a Lasco of Poland, not long after, using his utmost endeavors to combine the Reformed and Lutheran confessions in that country. When the Heidelburg Catechism was published in 1562 as an exposition of the views held by the Reformed Church in Germany, it was at once translated into many languages and adopted by other Presbyterian Churches of Europe. The Dutch Synod of Dort was in intention, if not in fact, a Protestant Œcumenical Council, an invitation to assist in its deliberations being extended to theologians of all the Reformed Churches. Switzerland was for a long time the visible centre of Presbyterian union. The Reformed in Germany and the Netherlands, in Scotland and France, in Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, in Italy and in Spain, held communication with the Swiss Churches and with one another in the land of Zwingle

and the adopted country of Calvin. And yet not one of them was an offshoot from Geneva. Even Cyrillus Lucaris, the patriarch of Constantinople, who presented to Charles I. of England the famous Alexandrian MS. of the Scriptures, visited that centre of religious interest, and was preparing to carry Presbyterian doctrine and principles into the Greek Church in Turkey, when Mohammedan suspicions cut short his life. The relations of the Scottish Church were principally with Switzerland, France and Holland. The connection of John Knox with Geneva, I need not dwell upon. Many other Scottish ministers were on terms of intimacy with their Swiss brethren. As for France, it was ever a home for the wandering Scot. "Fidele comme un Ecossais" had passed into a proverb there. Knox preached in the Huguenot churches, and Welch, his son-in-law, became a French pastor. Andrew Melville taught theology at Sedan, and Boyd and Cameron were professors in Saumur. In the early part of the seventeenth century, fourteen Scotch ministers had their names on the Synod roll of the French Church. Holland was a refuge for the distressed in Covenanting times, and, with its Presbytery of banished Scottish ministers, did much for the maintenance of religious ordinances in Scotland, by educating and ordaining young men who were not afraid of the persecutor's sword. Calderwood, Livingstone and Brown were honored names in the Church of the Low Countries. But the sympathies of Scottish Presbyterianism

were wider still. Collections amounting to large sums—in one case over 100,000 pounds Scots—were made from 1604 onwards for the persecuted Churches of Switzerland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, and the Reformed in Denmark, and fasts were appointed in connection with the distressed state of the Churches in France, Bohemia and Holland. The French Church also, in the midst of its own trials, aided many refugees from Spain and other countries, ransomed numerous captives carried into slavery by African pirates, helped the Piedmontese with money, of which it sorely stood in need itself, and interceded with their persecutor and with the French king on their behalf. This Church must also be added to those which strove for Protestant union, for, in 1603, we find it corresponding with the Churches of Germany and Switzerland, Holland, England and Scotland, with a view to a conference in which the Lutherans might be induced to join the brotherhood of the Reformed. The Church of England belonged to this brotherhood till the days of Laud and his unfortunate king, but when the Commonwealth came, the sympathies of all save the one little Episcopal Church of the Moravian Brethren were transfered to the men of the Westminster Assembly and their successors. The Westminster Assembly itself conceived the design of uniting all the Churches of Protestant Christendom, as Calvin had thought of attempting long before. They all believed in the Holy Catholic Church.

The first half of the seventeenth century was a dark period for Protestant Europe. Bohemia, full of gospel light, refused to recognize its Austrian ruler, and called the Presbyterian Elector-Palatine to the throne. The whole power of the Papacy was hurled against the devoted land of Huss and Jerome, which called in vain for assistance to the Lutheran princes of Germany. They were more jealous of Calvinists than of Rome. James of England was implored to help his son-in-law, the Bohemian king, but his tastes lay more in the way of writing books on the divine right of kings than of battling manfully for the truth. But Presbyterian Scotland out of her poverty sent aid to the Bohemian Church. Meanwhile, Count Mansfeldt and the brave young Christian of Brunswick continued the struggle till death removed them; Christian of Denmark carried it on feebly for a time, and with ill success; and then, with a heart above his Lutheran creed, the great Gustavus Adolphus took the field against downtrodden Protestantism. It is not my province here to describe the victories of Leipsic and Lutzen which have immortalized the name of the gallant and pious Swedish king, nor, though worthy of double honor, is it his catholicity that I wish to exhibit, for he was no Presbyterian save in so far as a Lutheran merits the name. But among the bravest of his blue-coated warriors, that joined in the battle hymn and bowed their heads in prayer, that stood like a wall of adamant against

the furious charge of Pappenheim's horse, and, with sword and pike, drove Wallenstein's invincible infantry in terror from the field, were the Presbyterian soldiers of the Scots Brigade. Henderson and Hepburn and little crooked Leslie, who afterwards became the general of the Covenant, were there, with many more stout officers, whose epitaphs unknown to fame may be read in Swedish churchyards to-day, or who carried back to Scotland the name and the memory of their royal hero Gustavus, or whose forgotten dust lies beneath the sod on the fields where they fought so well for liberty. Men may call them mercenaries if they please, but theirs was not the spirit of the mercenary. The discipline of Gustavus was strict in the extreme. No plundering was allowed in his Christian army; and morning and night each regiment formed hollow square, facing inwards where its chaplain stood, to hear the word of God and lift up the heart in prayer. Mere mercenaries would have been ill at ease in such a host. These Scottish warriors fought and bled and laid down their lives far from pleasant Forth and Clyde, from Tweed and Tay, and the heather hills of their native land, as a practical witness to Presbyterian catholicity.

We cannot claim for the Presbyterian Church of post-reformation times in all its sections the full spirit of toleration that now prevails in the Protestant world; yet it showed itself more tolerant than any other branch of the Protestant Church which was ever in a

position to exhibit the spirit of persecution. Where shall we look for instances of intolerance—to Scotland? No man suffered death for his religion there, at the hands of or by the instigation of the Church. To Switzerland? The one solitary case of Servetus, cruel and indefensible as the action was, is made to do duty as an argument against Calvinism and Presbyterianism that Churches in whose skirts is the blood of many martyrs should blush to name. When fugitives from the Marian persecution fled first to Denmark and then to Lubeck and Hamburg, sorely distressed, and in inclement weather, the Lutheran divines drove them forth to sea again on account of their Presbyterian faith and polity, calling them the martyrs of the devil. When was it heard that Presbyterians did the like? Have they not ever with open arms welcomed the persecuted? I admit that the Presbyterians of England were in many respects harsh, although it was no wonder, since oppression will drive wise men mad, and the Puritans had had their share of the evil things of this world. But it is a great mistake to think with Stoughton and other partial writers that independency lies at the root of England's toleration. Independency never possessed the power of being intolerant but once. It reigned supreme for a time in the New England colonies, and inflicted miseries there on Baptists and Quakers that find no parallel in British Presbyterian history. For the times in which they lived, of all men the most tolerant and the least ad-

dicted to the sword of persecution were those who professed the Presbyterian name.

I have no time to speak as I should of Presbyterian Missions. In the middle of the sixteenth century Geneva began a mission to Brazil, and in the beginning of the seventeenth, Holland commenced a more successful work in the Dutch East Indies. Early in the eighteeenth century the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge arose in Scotland. Among the many good works supported by this Society one is worthy of special mention—the mission to the Delaware Indians carried on by Horton, the Brainerds, and Jonathan Edwards. Thirty Lenape boys who could answer every question in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism in 1745, long before Christian missions had taken hold of the Church's conscience, were a tribute to the far reaching sympathy of Presbyterians not to be despised. Ireland and the Highlands were fields of Church extension that the Scottish Church assiduously cultivated. The North American colonies, peopled in part by representatives of the Presbyterian Churches of Germany, Holland, France, Scotland, and Ireland, and aided in every section by the Scottish Church, I leave to a future lecturer. Who shall fix the limits of Presbyterian Missions at the present day. There is no quarter of the globe unoccupied, no heathen nation of any note overlooked, no Israelite community or apostate Christian Church unvisited by the Presbyterian missionary, save those in which and

to whom other evangelical denominations minister. Switzerland and France, Germany and the Netherlands, with the greater Churches of Britain, her colonies, and America, are all engaged in this noble work; and when we consider the talent, zeal and piety enlisted in the cause, and the vast sums of money expended for its advancement, it must be confessed that, *if* the creed of the Calvinist be narrow, his heart is very large.

I think I have demonstrated that in its conception of the Church and in the practical influence of that conception, the Presbyterian Church is at least second to none in catholicity. I propose now to glance at the last part of my thesis, namely: the constant recognition in the Church of our Presbyterian faith and polity, and their wide diffusion from reformation times to the present day. Calvinism is nothing new. It is the old doctrine of the Church, received by intelligent Bible reading Christians from apostolic days, acknowledged by the early œcumenical councils, and notably that of Ephesus which condemned the heresy of Pelagius In most of its essential features it was set forth by Augustine in the fifth century; homologated, among many others, by the Venerable Bede in the eighth; defended by the learned and pious Anselm in the eleventh; and maintained as the true doctrine of the Church by the great Aquinas in the thirteenth. But, as it became the doctrine of the reformers before the Reformation in many parts of Europe, and as Romish doctors who held it opposed the newly invented

dogmas of Rome, the infallible Church virtually declared its past experience of truth to be heresy, and fell into the Pelagian errors of the accommodating Franciscan Scotists. As for Presbyterian polity, I trust I shall not be trespassing on another lecturer's ground by referring to authorities in episcopal churches who freely admit our claim of Scriptural warrant and primitive order. There are many fathers in whose writings it is either deliberately stated or plainly implied that no such distinction as episcopacy recognizes between presbyter and bishop was known in the early Church. Jerome, the editor of the infallible Vulgate and the contemporary of Augustine, is one of these; and his language is most unequivocal and explicit. In the twelfth century two famous works appeared which formed the basis of all Systematic Theology and Ecclesiastical Law. Peter Lombard was the author of the first, and Gratian of the second; names that Rome holds in high honor. Both of these writers, the latter indeed quoting the words of Jerome, are equally clear as to there being originally but two orders in the Church, those of the presbyter or bishop and the deacon. Religious bodies like the Culdees and Wickliffites held the same view; and among the many witnesses for this truth appears one who, though claimed by the early Vaudois as the greatest of their bishops, seems never to have severed his connection with Rome—Claudius of Turin. This apostolic pastor of the ninth century protested

against every erroneous doctrine and practice that Rome's development theory had sanctioned in his day, and maintained the original parity of bishops and presbyters. No Church of the Reformation, with the exception of the Church of England, and perhaps the little Church of the Moravian Brethren, ever allowed the scriptural warrant for diocesan episcopacy, and in the former Church it was opposed by the large Puritan party. The Scandinavian branches of the Lutheran Church, in opposition to the advice of their German brethren, retained an episcopacy similar to that of the Episcopal Methodists in this country, but were careful to assert that the institution was of human not of divine appointment. And if you seek to know what is the opinion of candid and intelligent Church of England theologians on the point, I would refer you to the commentaries of the late Dean Alford and Bishop Ellicott upon the Pastoral Epistles, in which they take the same ground as Jerome and Claudius, Lombard and the Reformers universally.

Romanists have often asked the question, "Where was your Church before Luther?" The able and instructive lecture delivered here last week presented us with a picture of primitive Christianity struggling for existence through the dark ages in many lands. The majority of Protestants cannot trace their ecclesiastical ancestry however, through any of these witnesses for the truth in Iona and Languedoc, the Waldensian valleys and Bohemia. Our sad answer to

Rome must be: "Our Church before Luther was just where yours was; we came out of the same corruption in which you are pleased to remain." The western Church down to the time of the Reformation, with all that is good and all that is bad in it is ours. The fathers were many of them far astray on some points of doctrine, not excepting Augustine and Jerome, and the school-men ran a race in error compared to which patristic movements were slow in the extreme; but we will not give up a single one, not even the mendicant monks and Dominic Guzman the Inquisitor, for even from the ragged ranks of his Dominicanes, or dogs of the Lord, came earnest hearts and minds that sought after God and battled for the truth and laid the foundation of the better Church that honors their memory. We may read the Confessions of Augustine and the Imitation of Thomas a Kempis, recite the creeds and sing the *Te Deum* as the churchliest of the churchly, not in a proud spirit of exclusiveness, but because it were a lie to our catholicity to call them the property of another rather than our own. But, says Rome, where is your identity with that old Church? exhibit it in some way. A schoolmaster was once lecturing to his scholars on the subject of personal identity. "Our bodies," he said, "change completely every seven years, our minds alter and our circumstances, yet we are the same individuals. Let us illustrate this by a well-known figure. You had a knife once, a two-bladed one. The

pins that fastened the blades in their place and bound the parts of the knife together became loose, and the great blade fell out and was lost. You had a new blade put in. The spring at the back became feeble and worn, and you replaced it with another. One of the sides of the handle fell away, and a new side took its place. So, by little and little, you changed every part of your knife; still it is the same knife." But a small boy with an earnest face whose sceptical look had puzzled the master, rose in his seat, and said, "Supposing I were to find the old blades, and springs, and sides of the handle, and pins, and were to put them all together again, what knife would that be?" History has not recorded the answer to that question. I repeat what I have elsewhere written upon this subject: the Church is the knife. In the first century it was whole and sound; but in the second one of the blades, called the spiritual nature of the Sacraments, became loose, soon fell out and was lost. In the third century, the side of the handle nearest this blade, called the true gospel ministry, began to shake, and at last was superseded by episcopacy and sacerdotalism. The spring at the back of the missing blade, which was the truth concerning the kingdom of the meek and lowly Jesus, dropped away in the fourth century, and in its place came, in time, the rise of the temporal power and the spirit of persecution, which was strengthened every year. The fifth and sixth centuries were the grave of the other side of the handle

called the simplicity and universality of worship, which gave place to a gorgeous ceremonial and vicarious religion. This led to weakness in the spring adjoining. Before the eighth century it fell, and was superseded by one called will-worship, carved all over with figures of the Virgin and angels, saints and relics. The name of the original spring was the first commandment, but all the other nine hang by it. The great blade had been loose for a long time, and at last it fell into the dust. It was the Word of God. Tradition took its place. Rome was a new knife, the work of which in the world seemed to be the wounding of God's saints and severing every tie between earth and heaven. Yet she pretended to be the same that God had sent into the world to cut the bonds of the captive and Satan's galling yoke. The reformers, Luther and Zwingle, Calvin and Knox, with Wickliffe, and those before them, found the old pieces of imperishable truth that Rome had rejected, fastened them firmly together as they had been in the days of old, and showed to the world the same knife that had done God's work in early ages. It is the same knife. If a beggar in the street had found it, still would it be the same. In every case, however, it was priests of Rome that found it, when the light became brighter and clearer; the wisest and most learned among Rome's best priests were those who learned that the knife they had carried so long was a blunt instrument for good, though sharp as a razor for evil, and longed to

hold in their hands one that should do the work of God in severing the soul from earth and sin, that it might be free for a heavenward flight. By that work, and not by any foolish theories of weak minds, let the personal identity of the Church of Christ be tested.

When the blessed Reformation came, it was in the overwhelming majority of cases a Presbyterian, or, in other words, a Bible Reformation. The Latin nations refused alike Episcopal Calvinism and Lutheranism. The Church of France, that in Beza's time counted 2150 congregations, some of which had 7,000 communicants and five ministers, was Presbyterian. So was that of the French Netherlands. The persecuted remnant of the Waldensian Alps adopted in full, as for ages they had in part, Presbyterian faith and polity; and the other short-lived Churches of Italy and Spain were of the same heart and mind. The Presbyterianism of French Switzerland I need not dwell upon. The Germanic nations were divided between the Reformed or Presbyterian and the Lutheran Confessions. Holland, with its many thousand martyrs, whose numbers throw St. Bartholomew even into the shade; the Palatinate of the Rhine, stained with the blood of rival hosts that battled for religious liberty and against it; Brandenburg, the parent state of Prussia's great empire, (for the royal house of Prussia has ever been of our faith); Hesse, Anhalt, Lippe, Bremen, and other states and towns adopted the principles of Presbyterianism, which Zwingle had planted in German Swit-

zerland. The Sclaves in Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, and neighboring countries were Presbyterians wherever Protestantism found its way among them, and only the German settlers in these lands retained their Lutheran creed. At one time not one Catholic could be found in a hundred of the population of Bohemia; now, alas, it is the other way. And the Magyars, that proud and gallant race of Hungary, who still boast a Presbyterian Church with two million adherents, might but for adverse circumstances have claimed the first rank in Pan-Presbyterian Councils to-day.

The recent Council has striven to gather up the fragments, fragments of what once were great and flourishing Churches. Does any one ask why the world is not so Presbyterian as once it was—ask where the Churches of the Reformation are now to be found? Where is the blood of many martyrs? Let the Inquisition in Spain and the Netherlands tell their dread secrets. Let St. Bartholomew, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and, long before, the Albigensian Crusade, lift up their gory heads and answer; and in minor tones let Scotland's killing time and England's black Bartholomew speak their mournful tale. Matthew Rhadonai, a Hungarian Popish bishop, shall tell us what Rome thought of Presbyterians because they held the doctrine of Augustine and the polity of Jerome. "I tell you," he says, "that an ox or an ass, the creeping things and the fish in the sea, yea, even the devil himself, would sooner be taken out of the abyss and

attain eternal life than a Calvinist. I know how dangerous the Calvinistic doctrine is. Robbers, Calvinists and Turks I will not tolerate." Small wonder that Presbyterians should by the spokesman of an apostate Church be placed between robbers and Turks, when by a similarly apostate Church of old their Lord and Master was crucified between two thieves.

Nec tamen consumebatur—it is not yet consumed. Phœnix-like, it raises its head again where once it was done to the death; in England, where acts of uniformity took away its Presbyteries and Synods and drove its members, on the one hand, to evangelical episcopacy and independency, and on the other, to Unitarianism; in Spain, where its ashes lie around long-forgotten stakes; in Italy, under the very shadow of that Vatican whose temporal power, now by God's grace gone I trust forever, strangled it almost at the very birth. Our Presbyterian principles have not had fair play in the past, nor have they yet. When God breaks every yoke and sends the times of refreshing to the dry and parched lands scorched by the hot breath of persecuting days, we may look for a visible realization of the ideal, and a world-wide home for the world-wide heart of our Presbyterianism. Then looking round upon a world that accepts and honors the truth for which our fathers lived, suffered and died, we may say without misgiving or divided affection, "I believe in the holy catholic Church." But in order to such a consummation, Presbyterians must extend rather than diminish their catholicity of feeling and practice, their

large heart taking in all that receive Christ and whom Christ receives; for the exclusive baptism of adults by immersion, forms of church government and worship, and the one-sidedness of Arminian and kindred creeds, errors though they may be, are not essential barriers to the grace of God, and should not hinder the communion of the saints. We have differences in the Presbyterian Church itself, and these not a few; much in its history in many lands that we cannot approve, and some things that we must condemn; errors in judgment and belief, faults of heart and life, even in the great men whose memories we most venerate. I seek to disparage no body of professing Christians, to cover or palliate nothing that has been or that is wrong in the wide communion of which we form a part; but this, as a student of history and of the word of God, I must say, that the Presbyterian Church is the soundest in doctrine, the purest in polity, the most abundant in labors, the most constant in suffering, the most catholic Church in Christendom.

We cannot but love the grand Church of Luther, with its child-like or boy-like overflowing heart, overflowing now with love, and now, alas, with angry zeal; with its brave champions and gentle scholars, its old-fashioned worship and its soul-stirring hymns, that have a hearty ring, a fullness and a roundness no other sacred songs can imitate. We love the Church of England with its noble Marian martyrs, its chaste and simple liturgy, its learned divines, and even its mistaken loyalty to an unworthy Stuart line of double

turncoats. We love the Independents, or Congregationalists as they are called here, for their fervent love of liberty, their kinship with ourselves as of the Puritan stock of England, the Ironsides alike of the Church and the battle-field. Our Baptist brethren share our warm affections, for they passed through great tribulation in the days of old and have been true to the great doctrines of God's redeeming grace. And who shall displace from our hearts the followers of Wesley, God's witnesses in a time of spiritual apathy to a living faith, an earnest Christian life, the nearness to every waiting soul of Him in whom we live and move and have our being? I had almost forgotten no obscure branch of our great Presbyterian family, the so-called Calvinistic Methodists of Wales, who have won back again the creed and polity of their old Culdee fathers, of which Rome robbed them twelve hundred years ago. I need not say that they are enshrined in our inner sanctuary of Church fellowship. All the others I have mentioned are half Presbyterian, or more, Presbyterian in creed or in polity, and some of them not far off in either. We do not ask the testimonies of Carlyle and Froude and Bismarck to what our Church is or to what she has done and can do, to the strength of her principles or the loyalty of her sons. Wisdom is justified of all her children. Look over the world and see. The Church of Rome alone can claim such a wide diffusion of her faith and rites as is enjoyed by the Church of the Presbyters. All other Christian communities are the exclusive property of

one nation or of one tongue. But ours knows no nationality, no race; the Celtic and the Latin, the German and the Sclavonic, and even the Ugrian Magyar, lie within her fold. And if it come to a trial of witnesses between our Church and Rome, and the world, that judges all things by sense, is to be the umpire in the case, let the comparison be made in arts and sciences, in politics and education, in literature and culture, in social progress and national prosperity, in all that outwardly tends to make men great and wise and good. The comparison has been made: the result is known; but few have thought that Presbyterianism had under God so large a share in that result. I trust that I have said nothing to make our Presbyterians of this city of Montreal narrow or selfish or spiritually proud, but I do hope that this humble tribute to our Church's greatness may help her sons and daughters to love and venerate her more highly, and that no folly of fashion, nor pleasure of sense, nor false claim of superiority may tempt them to exchange her for any less catholic Church. And may God ever make her more worthy of Himself and of that treasure which He has placed in her keeping, the everlasting gospel of His dear Son, until all differences be taken out of the way, till the watchmen of Zion, knowing as they are known, see eye to eye, till the warfare of the Church militant is accomplished, and the Church universal and triumphant stands in the visible presence of its glorified Head, the one Bishop of our souls, with the four and twenty Presbyters around His throne.

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